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Celebrating the nation's central pillar, public servants

KUALA LUMPUR: 1st of May is dedicated as the Worker's Day, a day of recognition for anyone considered as a worker regardless in the public or the private sector.

And speaking of workers in the public sector, they are regarded as the frontline transformation agent in ensuring the successful implementation of the government policies for the benefit of the people.

Thus the workers day celebration this time around celebrates the public servants and their role for the benefit of the people and their counterparts in the private sector.

In line with their role, the theme "Public Servant, the Central Pillar of the Nation" (Penjawat Awam, Tiang Seri Negara) was chosen as an appreciation for the 1.4 million public servants who serve as the intermediary between the government and the people.

Like a central pillar of a house that supports the whole structure, the civil servant is seen as the pillar of strength with high integrity and productivity in serving the people.

To serve as the central pillar, the civil servants have to come out of the comfort zone and shed the negative image harboured by the public on them.

The "work for salary" attitude has to be eradicated and civil servants should be fully aware that the discerning society of today has high anticipation of them.

Efficient, fast and high integrity are the mantras in enhancing the public confidence on the civil service, according to the head of the Political, Security and

International Relations Cluster of the National Professor Council Datuk Dr Mohamed Mustafa Ishak.

"They have to be aware that their salary is paid with the taxpayers' money. People want to see efficient and effective service with optimum results and done under low cost," he said while commenting on the theme of the Worker's Day this year.

Dr Mohamed who is also the Universiti Utara Malaysia's (UUM) Vice Chancellor noted that it called for greater professionalism and self sacrifice in enhancing the service delivery to the people.

"If the public service delivery system fails, it reflects the failure of public servants in carrying out the government's agenda. This also indicates the failure of the government to function effectively.

"This is what civil servants have to understand and not just work for the salary," he said.

Fulfilling the aspirations of the people should serve as the underlying principles in providing the best services to the people.

While the public sector is often at the receiving end for the poor work attitude of a small group of public servants, the majority of the public servants are hard-working and responsible in carrying out the business of the government.

Therefore, in ensuring that the pillars of the civil service remain in good condition, the welfare of the civil servants have to be taken care off. The Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (Cuepacs) works tirelessly to ensure the fate of the civil servants are

well taken care off.

Its president, Azih Muda noted that though the civil servants' well-being is close to the heart of the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, there remain matters that demoralised the civil servants and warranted the government's attention.

As for example, home ownership is not within the reach of many civil servants in big cities like Kuala Lumpur, Johor Baharu and Penang.

Many civil servants who have less than 10 years service will find it difficult to save for buying a home as bulk of their salary goes to paying the house rent and

the baby-sitter. "The government has earmarked to build one million homes. We hope that the government servants will benefit from this and it is hoped that they would not retire at 58 or 60 without a roof over their head," he said.

The healthcare for public servants is also something that is strongly advocated by Cuepacs, especially relating to chronic diseases. Good health is something fundamental in helping civil servants contribute their best for the country, he said.

Among the things considered in this respect, is introducing dedicated haemodialysis centres for public servants as the facilities in public hospitals are overwhelmed.

Like their private sector counterparts, the public sector employees' contribution to the nation too is highly appreciated and together they represent the intrinsic power of the masses in developing and managing Malaysia. – Bernama